

forces outside Southeast Asia for the first time in more than 50 years. Some of you have just returned from Afghanistan, where you gave many months of service. Thai engineers rebuilt Afghanistan's national airfield and helped restore much of that country's infrastructure. And the Afghan people and the American people are grateful for your service. The Thai task force is a vital part of the multinational division in Karbala, Iraq, once again helping a shattered country rebuild after years of oppression.

Inside your own country, you are pursuing dangerous terrorists and finding them, and America thanks you for ending the lethal career of the terrorist Hambali, who is suspected of planning the attack on Bali and other acts of terror. Thailand pledged to fight the war on terror, and that pledge is being honored in full.

Thailand is also a force of good throughout Southeast Asia. When East Timor was torn by violence, Thai forces joined with Americans and Australians to bring stability, and they helped establish the world's newest nation. This important work has brought dignity to the people of East Timor and greater security to this region.

Together, our two nations are fighting the drug trade by sharing intelligence that helps Thai law enforcement officials interdict shipments and catch drug traffickers. We're fighting the trafficking in human beings to abolish a modern form of slavery.

America supports your country's humane efforts to find, defuse, and dispose of landmines. And having cooperated for decades to fight hepatitis and malaria, we're now working together to turn the tide against AIDS.

America and Thailand understand that trade and growth are the only sure ways to spread prosperity and lift people and nations out of poverty. And this morning I'm pleased to announce that the United States and Thailand are planning to launch negotiations toward a free trade agreement. This region and our world must one day trade in freedom.

In all our common efforts, we are confident of the outcome. We're confident in the power of freedom to overcome hatred and uplift whole nations. We're confident in the strength of our alliance, and I have acted

to designate Thailand a major non-NATO ally of the United States. And we're confident in the character of those who defend us. American and Thai forces serve together and train together and study at military academies in each other's countries. We have come to know and respect one another.

America remembers and honors a young man named Kemaphoom Chanawongse, known to his family and friends as Ahn. He was born in Bangkok, the grandson of a Royal Thai Air Force veteran. He moved to America when he was 9 years old, fulfilled his great ambition to become a United States Marine. Ahn was part of the force that defeated the army of Saddam Hussein. He was killed in action near An Nasariyah. This son of Thailand, this American patriot, was buried among America's greatest military heroes at Arlington National Cemetery. This brave marine brought honor to the Nation he served and honor to the nation of his birth.

Thailand and the United States lie thousands of miles apart. Yet in the ideals we serve, we will always be close. America is grateful for your friendship. We respect the skill and valor of the Royal Thai military, and we're proud to stand by your side in the cause of peace. May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. (Ret.) Thammarak Isarangkun an Ayuttha, Thailand's Minister of Defense; King Phumiphon Adunyadet, Queen Sirikit, and Prime Minister Thaksin Chinnawat of Thailand; Nurjaman Riduan Isamuddin (known as Hambali), Al Qaida's chief operational planner in Southeast Asia; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Hu Jintao of China in Bangkok

October 19, 2003

President Bush. President Hu and I have had a very constructive dialog. We talked about a lot of important issues. We talked about the issue of trade. We talked about the need to make sure that trade is open and that both countries benefit from trade. I congratulated China on its recent space launch. I thanked the President for his work on the

recent Security Council resolution for Iraq. We talked about our mutual desire to wage and win the fight against terror. We spent time, of course, talking about North Korea. We have a mutual goal, and that is that the Peninsula be free of nuclear weapons.

I want to thank the President for leading the Beijing talks. We talked about how to advance the Beijing talks. We talked about how to advance them to achieving a mutual goal, which is a weapons-free Peninsula as well as addressing the security concerns of North Korea within the context of the six-party talks.

So we've had a very constructive dialog, and I want to thank the President.

President Hu. I just had a friendly meeting with President Bush. This is our second meeting in this year. I think that in itself shows the very sound momentum of the development of our bilateral relations.

We discussed the questions such as the economy and trade, the terror question, counterterrorism, Iraq, and North Korean nuclear issue. We both agreed that the economic cooperation and trade between our two countries have benefited our two peoples tremendously, and we stated our readiness to resolve whatever questions that might emerge in our economic exchanges and trade through dialog.

President Bush restated his Government's position of adhering to the "one China" policy, the three China-U.S. joint communiques, and his opposition to Taiwan independence. And we both stated our desire to further intensify our cooperation against the terrorism.

About the North Korean nuclear issue, I said to the President that China will continue to strengthen our communication and consultations with various parties concerned, and we will continue to work to promote the Beijing six-party talks process, so as to strive for a peaceful resolution of this issue.

I'm ready to work together with the President to promote further development of our constructive and cooperative relationship.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:52 p.m. at the Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to President Hu Jintao on China's First Human Space Mission

October 19, 2003

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the American people, I congratulate you and the Chinese people on the successful completion of China's first human space mission. I was pleased to learn that Lieutenant Colonel Yang Liwei returned safely to earth. This mission was an historic triumph for the Chinese people and a milestone in the continued exploration of space.

The United States of America warmly welcomes the People's Republic of China's achievement in becoming only the third country to launch an astronaut into space, and wishes you continued success in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by King Phumiphon Adunyadet and Queen Sirikit of Thailand in Bangkok

October 19, 2003

Thank you, Your Majesty, for your warm and gracious welcome. Thanks also to Her Majesty the Queen for hosting this event. I thank as well the Grand Chamberlain who earlier today led us on a tour of the magnificent Temple of the Emerald Buddha. Laura and I have been seeing the famous hospitality of the Thai people, and we are most grateful.

The United States of America deeply values our alliance with the Kingdom of Thailand. Your Majesty, the world has changed greatly since your reign began 57 years ago. Yet thanks to your enlightened leadership and steady hand, the friendship between our two nations has remained constant.

Over the decades, we worked together to build the foundations of liberty in this region, rule of law, respect for human rights, free enterprise, and peace. Today, we continue to strive toward the same goals in the face of different challenges. Nations are working together in Afghanistan and Iraq. Royal Thai